

ACADEMY NEWS LETTER

NUMBER 204

DECEMBER 1956

Leon Salanave became associated with the Academy in a consulting capacity on the development of plans for the Alexander F. Morrison Planetarium while on the staff of Sacramento State College. It was he who carried on the considerable mathematical job of determining the correct positions of the thousands of stars on the star plates in the planetarium instrument. He joined the Academy's regular staff July 1, 1952, and since has become well known as a planetarium lecturer. He graduated from the University of California (Berkeley) with the class of 1940 and received his Master's degree in 1947. He tells us that on his new job he will be working at the National Astronomical Observatory's Phoenix, Arizona, headquarters, helping Dr. Aden B. Meinel with the night-time studies now underway, until a start is made on the solar site survey.

STUDENT SECTION IS ACTIVE

STUDENT SECTION QUARTERS underneath the main Academy exhibit hall are buzzing with activity these days following the summer vacation. According to Alan Leviton and Raymond Bandar, who are directing the work of the Student Section beginning this fall, a total of 80 boys and girls have enrolled and are working on a wide variety of natural history projects. A full schedule of field and collection trips has been planned for these future scientists and naturalists.

DR. HANNA GOES NORTH AGAIN

THE ACADEMY'S RANKS have been temporarily reduced by the departure of Dr. G. Dallas Hanna for Point Barrow, Alaska, on a special assignment for the Arctic Research Laboratory, where he may be located all of this winter. "Doc" and Mrs. Hanna left by personal car about the middle of October for Fairbanks over the newly opened route connecting with the Alcan Highway at Dawson Creek. He reports the drive to Fairbanks was an exceedingly interesting one, made without serious incident. Driving conditions were good. The jump from Fairbanks to Point Barrow was, of course, by air. Mrs. Hanna writes: "Point Barrow really has a wintry look and feel to it. Enough snow to cover the tundra and streets around camp—and cold enough so it squeaks underfoot. Many little white arctic foxes running all over camp—such beautiful little animals and quite tame as everyone feeds them. There is one lone red fox—a stunning creature! Hope to get some pictures." So do we.

NEW MEMBERS

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS were elected by the Council at its meeting of November 15, 1956:

REGULAR MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Albin Dittli
Mr. Charles B. Dugdale
Mr. Meldon A. Embury
Mrs. John Finn III
Miss Sophie S. Meier
Mr. Conrad L. Peterson
Mr. William J. Reese, Jr.
Mr. Vernon W. Rupp

Mr. Fred H. Yoshino
Mrs. Star Carter

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

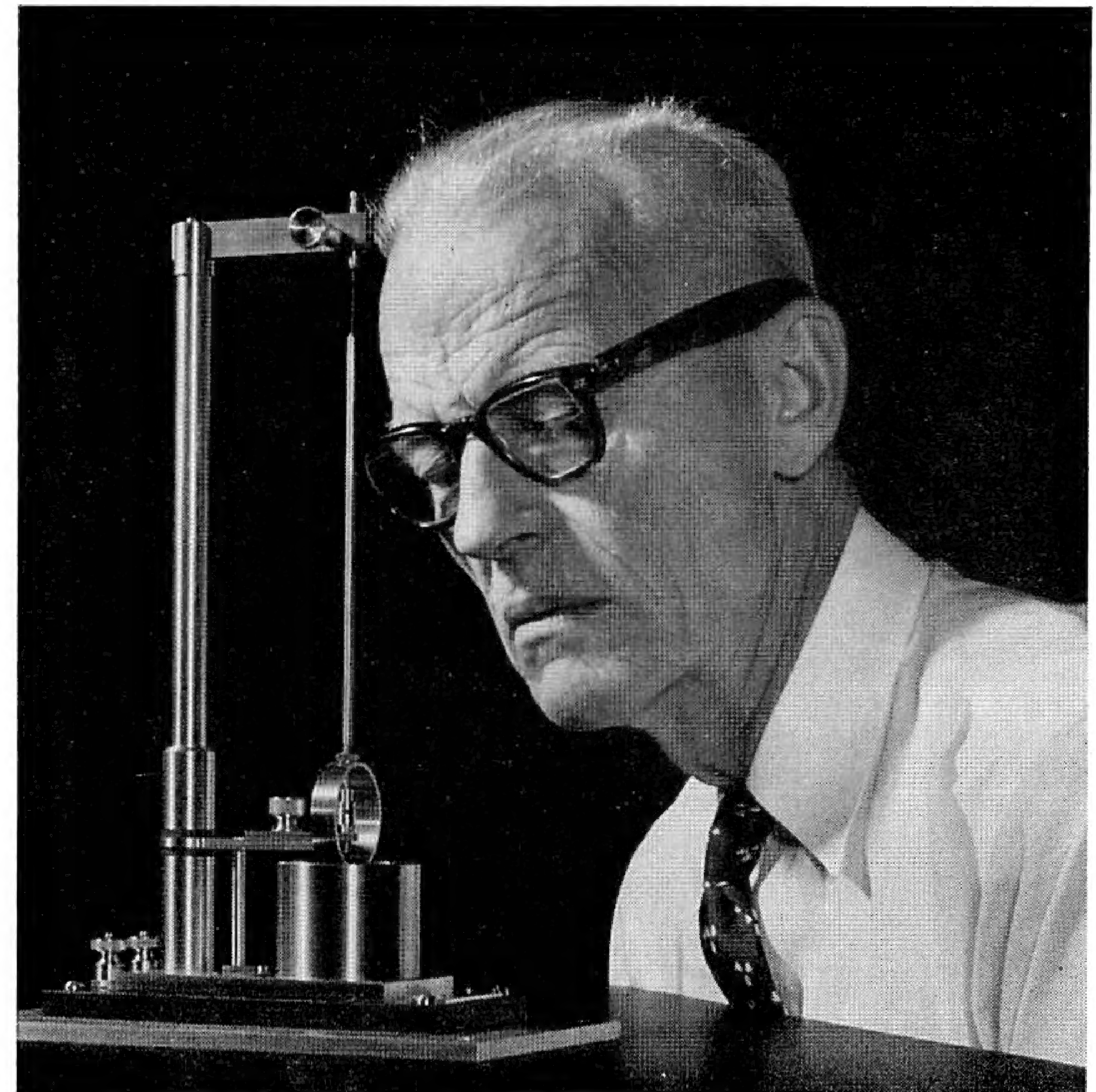
Mr. Sam Scripps
Mr. Frank P. Westfall

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP

Mr. and Mrs. G. Baltzer Peterson

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Matthew C. Carberry



A. S. GETTEN FINISHES STARTER

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December Announcement

THE REGULAR DECEMBER MEETING of the California Academy of Sciences will be held at 8:15 P.M., Thursday, December 6, in the May Treat Morrison Auditorium. This month's Walter B. Scaife Foundation lecturer will be Mr. Alexander Sprunt, Jr., famous naturalist, and widely known as a result of his personally conducted Audubon Wildlife Tours, who will take his audience on a color motion picture expedition into:

"CYPRESS KINGDOM"

In all the world, few regions are quite so mysterious as the Cypress Kingdom, wooded labyrinth of the deep South, home of the Seminole Indian and that vicious, poisonous snake, the cottonmouth. Those few who have been fortunate enough to penetrate the watery wilderness of the cypress swamp know it to abound with interesting and unusual plant and animal life.

Mr. Sprunt will lead the way through the area, deep into oxbows and sloughs by air, by boat, and on foot. Here one sees above only intermittent patches of blue sky, with curve-billed ibis circling above their treetop nesting colonies; but below, one must be wary of alligators half-hidden in lettuce lakes and one will catch glimpses of the anhinga, or snake bird, swimming through shadow-marked water. Barred owls in upper tree branches watch egrets fishing among cypress knees and other herons preening in the sunlight. And the lush foliage here and there contains airplants and miniature orchids.

In addition to this impressive glimpse of the fauna and flora of the cypress kingdom, Mr. Sprunt's account of vivid tales of the Seminoles and their unusual mode of life—part ancient, part modern—does not fail to delight his audiences.

Academy members and the public are cordially invited to attend this monthly lecture meeting.

JANUARY MEETING

FIRST ACADEMY MONTHLY meeting in 1957 is scheduled for January 23. This will feature an illustrated lecture, "Animals at Night in Color," by Howard Cleaves. More on this in our January announcement. But in the meantime make a note of the date.

GETTEN TURNS ATOMIC

A. S. GETTEN of the Academy's optical and instrument shop recently built two small instruments which, he tells us, are accelerograph pendulum starters, delicate but very dependable devices which under specified conditions will close an electrical circuit. What makes them worthy of mention is the fact that when installed they will be a part of the Boiling Water Reactor which General Electric is building at its Vallecitos Atomic Laboratory near Livermore.

When in operation the reactor will supply steam to Pacific Gas and Electric turbines to produce commercial power. This will be the first time nuclear-electric power has ever been generated in the United States entirely under private

financing. The reactor is an important milestone in the march of progress and we are proud the Academy had a part in it, even though it was a small one.

RUEL CROCKER CHANGES JOBS

SINCE SEPTEMBER, 1952, Ruel Crocker, Science Writer on the Academy's staff, has been editing this NEWSLETTER. In addition, he has been busy writing articles on Academy happenings for the press and doing a legion of useful things to keep the Academy in the public eye. This, we regret to say, is preliminary to the news of Ruel's acceptance, late last month, of a new position with Stonelight, a ceramic tile manufacturer in San Jose, where Ruel makes his home. During the four-year period Ruel Crocker was with us, the Academy made many valuable and lasting friends.

It would be an understatement to say his cheerful presence will be missed, but, at the same time we wish him all possible success in his new work.

The Academy has appointed Gary Barrett, until recently editor of the *Sausalito News*, to fill the position vacated by Mr. Crocker.

WILSONS VISIT UPPSALA

WE ARE TAKING the liberty of quoting from a letter just received from Carol Green Wilson, Alice Eastwood's biographer. Carol and her husband, George O. Wilson, are paying an extended visit to the Continent. She writes: "We have been to Uppsala! And not only there, but to the Linnaeus Farm at Hammarby, where his garden still grows and the worn chair faces his desk by a window looking out over green fields. We climbed moss-covered rocks leading to the brick museum behind and above the red house. We wondered how Alice Eastwood ever managed to clamber up there to 'sit in the chair of Linnaeus.' But we had proof from the delightful gentleman who 'lent an arm' for the downward trek.

"Dr. Arvid Uzzla, librarian-emeritus of Uppsala and secretary of the Linnaean Society, recalled this and other incidents of Miss Eastwood's visit in 1950 when he met us later at the Uppsala Linnaean Garden."

SALANAVE TO NEW ASTRONOMY POST

SOME TIME SOON the Academy will lose its associate curator of Astronomy and leader of its Astronomy Section, Leon Salanave, who has accepted a position as Research Associate in the University of Michigan's Department of Astronomy. The University is under contract with the National Science Foundation to establish two large astronomical units. One is an observatory for at least an 80-inch reflecting telescope, plus a solar tower with a 60-inch telescope, expected to be the largest of its type; the other is a parabolic radio antenna, 140 feet in diameter, which may be the second largest to be built so far.

Leon's initial job will be to select the best possible site for the solar observatory. He says that while several Arizona peaks are being tested for the best day-time "seeing," Californians will be interested to know that Junipero Serra Peak in the central part of the state is high on the favored list. Other possible sites that may have to be explored are in the Hawaiian and other Pacific islands. It will not be news to Academy members that Junipero Serra Peak was the scene of the Academy's recent 6-week Mars Patrol project which was successfully carried on by Mr. Salanave during the close approach of Mars this summer.